

An Unconfirmed Report of the Crab-eater Seal on the South Coast.—At Cheyne Beach in 1959 Mr. Jack Westerberg, a local fisherman, described to me a strange seal he saw in October 1958. It was the largest he had ever seen, longer and more slender than the resident species (*Neophoca cinerea*), with large eyes and short pointed muzzle, and wholly pale in coloration. It first appeared on Cheyne Beach where it remained for a day or two. A little later it was seen on the small beach south of Lookout Point, then it disappeared for good.

Mr. Westerberg's description fits only the Crab-eater Seal (*Lobodon carcinophaga*), an Antarctic species that wanders rarely to the coasts of New Zealand and south-eastern Australia.

—G. M. STORR, Nedlands.

Silvereyes Feeding on Kangaroo Paws.—On January 3, 1961, while camping near Bayonet Head, Albany, I noticed that a number of the petals of the flowers of the Tree Kangaroo Paw (*Anigozanthos flavida*) had been slit open, apparently by attacks of birds. While watching a clump of flowers I saw a flock of Silvereyes (*Zosterops australasiae*) feeding. The birds in obtaining the nectar make a cut just below the outer edge of the petal, then slit this down to the nectaries.

Clearly this method of feeding, so unlike that of the honey-eaters, is disadvantageous to the plant. It is interesting to speculate what effect this process of obtaining nectar by means of a short cut would have on the amount of seed set by the plant. Also if the birds were in large numbers whether it would have any long term significance on the biological success of the plant species.

—V. N. SERVENTY, Wembley Downs.

True Identity of a "Lost" Species, *Caladenia drummondii* Benth.—For many years the true identity of *Caladenia drummondii* Benth. has been a puzzle to Australian orchidologists. In 1960 I was able to examine Drummond's type collection at the Kew Herbarium, and solve the mystery. Bentham's species proved to be that which was given the name *Caladenia glossodiphylla* Rupp and Erikson (in *W.A. Nat.*, 4(3), 1953: 65) in the belief that it was a previously undescribed species. When considering differences between the Rupp-Erikson description and the original Bentham description the discrepancies, when checked with material, are to be found in the latter work. However Bentham can be excused for the indefinitude and inaccuracy of some points in his description in the light of the fact that he had only two small pressed specimens on which to base it. Of the labellum, Bentham's description states, rather indefinitely—"the lateral lobes broadly rounded, apparently white and entire." A drawing of the labellum based on the type material, executed in 1908 by M. Smith, clearly shows the toothing of these lobes, as noted in the Rupp-Erikson description. In considering his statement concerning the calli "in about 4 rows" it must be realised that the variability of rows of calli, from 4 to

6 rows, could hardly be assessed accurately from two pressed specimens. Many writers subsequent to Bentham placed undue emphasis on his statement concerning the leaf "broader for its length than any other species of *Caladenia*" and disregarded his qualification "but not yet fully developed."

—J. R. TONKINSON, Mosman Park.

Unusual Boobook Owl Call.—Storr (*W.A. Nat.*, 4 : 143.) recorded an unusual call of a Boobook Owl (*Ninox novaezeelandiae*) which he likened to a pumping plant, heard on March 12, 1954 at Dunsborough.

A similar call was heard at Carbarup, just north of Mt. Barker, during 1958. Carbarup siding is near a patch of low-lying Wandoo-Yate association providing a suitable habitat for hollow roosting birds. At 2300 hrs. on August 8 there was no moon and the night was still and clear. Three Boobooks were heard calling the normal "boo-book" call, regular calls being given every three to four seconds.

One bird then commenced calling much more rapidly with increasing tempo until at last the first syllable of the call was completely suppressed and only the final "book" was being given. For the first five minutes of the call I counted the "books"—450. The call then continued for about another five minutes, so altogether something like a thousand "books" must have been given during the time it lasted. Calling then ceased and all birds were silent.

It is worthy of note also that although the night was extremely dark Western Magpies (*Gymnorhina dorsalis*) were heard calling full carols at the time when the Owls started. At this time of the year moonlight songs might be expected (Robinson, *Emu*, 56 : 282) but calling in complete darkness seems unusual. Possibly the birds were disturbed when my Land Rover drove up.

—ERIC LINDGREN, Shenton Park.

Possible Record of a Yellow-billed Spoonbill near Narrikup.—In addition to the recent records of the Yellow-billed Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*) in the South-West (*W.A. Nat.*, 6 : 151, 196) is an observation on November 2, 1958 of what appears to be this species at a lake about 4 miles west of Narrikup, locally known as Lake Erie.

The lake is some 40-50 acres in area and is surrounded almost completely by a border of twig rush (*Cladium* sp.). At the time the birds were recorded there was shallow water outside the rushes, covering a firm surface of fodder and small water plants. This is mentioned because in the field I misidentified the birds as Royal Spoonbills (*P. leucorodia*) recording in my notebook that they had a yellow bill and black legs. Checking through Serventy and Whittell, *The Handbook of the Birds of W.A.*, I found that the Royal Spoonbill had black bill and legs and the Yellow-billed species yellow legs and bill. It seemed possible that the bird's legs might have become discoloured by mud, although improbable that they